



SURVIVOR

Outreach Services (SOS)

NOVEMBER 2011

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**SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:**

- Enduring Freedom Memorial Rededication
- Wreaths Across America
- Taking Time For Yourself
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ENDURING FREEDOM MEMORIAL REDEDICATION

Saturday, 29 October 2011, Families and Friends gathered at the Wesley Bolin Plaza to pay tribute to the many Heroes who were killed while serving overseas in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. As these brave men and women served our country proudly, we honor them by visiting the Enduring Freedom Memorial. While you remember every day, many people forget the price that is paid for our Freedom. This is one way we can honor our Fallen and their Families.

We will not forget those left behind and who have supported our men and women in uniform. Most do not know the price that a Family pays when their loved one says, "I (NAME), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same." Not only is the Service Member making sacrifices, but their loved ones are too. It is a tough road that each individual faces, but the "never give up" atti-

tude keeps the family and friends remembering and honoring their loved one.

As we listened to the names of the brave men and women that Saturday and observed tears of sorrow and love and the smiles of pride and joy as memories of their loved ones filled their hearts, it reminds us of the blessings that we so often take for granted.

As the Enduring Freedom Memorial Rededication came to a close, loved ones filled the monument time capsule with items they wanted to leave with their hero, signifying that they will never be forgotten and will always be loved. Children, parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, relatives, and other loved ones

once again honored the life and heroic acts of so many that voluntarily served and sacrificed so much to defend and support this great Nation.



HEIGHTS CHURCH CONCERT-PRESCOTT, AZ

Reminder!!! Please join us on Heights Church in Prescott, AZ. Special guest will be Justin Unger in concert. All proceeds go to Wreaths Across America.

"Our Fallen Soldiers"



A Fundraising Concert to Salute Our Soldiers And Veterans

Saturday, November 12, 2011
10:00 am - 11:30 am

Music By: Justin Unger

The Heights Church
2121 Larry Caldwell Drive
Prescott, AZ
Main Auditorium

A love offering will be taken during the event to benefit the Wreaths Across America in Prescott National Cemetery December 10, 2011 at 1000 am.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 2011

Last year, some of you attended the Wreaths Across America ceremony, which was held at the Phoenix National Memorial Cemetery in December. Thank you so much for your support of our troops! It is time to start preparing for this year's Wreaths Across America ceremony.

Wreaths Across America is about honoring our Heroes, who have given so much of themselves in defense of all that we hold dear. Many have given the ultimate sacrifice. This year's theme is "The Christmas They Never Had". It is in honor of those who have had to spend the holidays away from loved ones, and in memory of those who never made it home. What better way to remember them and show our appreciation this holiday season than to support Wreaths Across America? Through your efforts to sponsor a wreath to be laid on the grave of one of our brave Heroes, and to get others to sponsor wreaths, we show that their sacrifices have not been in vain. As long as we remember them, they live on - in our hearts, in our memories, and in our efforts to honor them. We also honor and show support for the brave Blue Star and Gold Star families who have sacrificed so much in support of the efforts of our Heroes.

Last year, there were 350 people in attendance at the Wreaths Across America ceremony, and 350 wreaths were laid at the Phoenix National Memorial Cemetery. How beautiful it would be for each grave to have a wreath laid upon it! This year, to move towards that goal, I would like to see a thousand wreaths laid. Won't you please sponsor a wreath, and encourage others to do the same. Wreaths are \$15.00 each. Please go online at <http://www.wreathsassamerica.org/store/> to sponsor a wreath, or send your generous donation to Wreaths Across America, C/O Lea Eppich, 148 S. 54th St. #B, Mesa, AZ 85206. Thank you for your support.

But there is more! I would like to invite each of you to attend the Wreaths Across America ceremony, which will be held Saturday, December 10th at 10:00 a.m. Arizona time at the Phoenix National Memorial Cemetery at 23029 North Cave Creek Road in Phoenix. Come and help us lay these beautiful, live boughs with gorgeous red bows on the graves of our Heroes, and join with us as we celebrate their lives and show appreciation for their sacrifices.

Lea Eppich

<http://www.oldguardriders.org>

In Loving Memory of SGT Robert Eppich

1981-2006

1/204th Military Police Company, Ft. Polk, LA



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



As we all get wrapped up in our busy lives with work, school, taking care of family and friends and other miscellaneous tasks, do not forget to take care of yourselves. Take time to do what you enjoy, letting yourself find ways to vent and partake in activities that you enjoy. I would also encourage you to take time at least a few days a week to conduct some form of physical fitness. Exercising is an excellent way to stay healthy, not only physically, but mentally as well. Do not forget that exercise is not always enjoyable, but finding ways to have fun with it is important. The better outlook you have on exercising, the easier it will become to inte-

grate it into your lives and make it a habit and a lifestyle. If anyone is interested in joining Kevin and Brook on upcoming mud/obstacle runs, please let us know. Below are the upcoming events in the Phoenix area. We would love for you to come out and participate!

AZ Urbanathlon
3 miles, 10 obstacles
November 5, 2011

<http://www.azurbanathlon.com/>

Mad Mud Run
4 miles, multiple obstacles
November 19, 2012

<http://www.madmudrun.com/>

Tough Mudder
11 miles, 23 obstacles
January 14th and 15th, 2012

<http://toughmudder.com/events/>

Super Spartan
February 11, 2012
8+ miles, 16 obstacles

<http://www.spartanrace.com/>

Warrior Dash
3.4 miles, 12 obstacles
No 2012 dates yet, 30 April in 2011

<http://www.warriordash.com/>

GOLD STAR DADS OF AMERICA

GSD Arizona Coordinator ~ Ron Eppich - Ron and his wife Lea are the proud parents of Sgt Robert Eppich 12/19/2006. NOTE:

Ron and Lea are long haul truckers and very busy during the week and take care of their own business on the weekends. He has graciously volunteered to temporarily act as state chairman until a full time replacement can be appointed.

Phone: (602) 885-7155 Contact - Ron Eppich



Official Gold Star Dads of America Membership is open to any father whose son or daughter died while on active duty in any U.S. branch of service. This includes any Soldier, Airman, Sailor, Marine or Coast Guardsman, killed in combat, during a training accident or as a result of natural causes or suicide. Gold Star Dads of America WILL NOT turn away any man who is grieving over the loss of his child and needs fellowship, consoling or prayer.

American Patriot Membership The American Patriot membership is our associate membership and is open to any man or women who believes in, and is willing to act on, our credo "**Fathers Standing United for Faith, Family and Freedom**" even if they have NOT lost a child. Patriots who are willing to set aside their politics and step outside their comfort zone and embrace those principles without prejudice are always welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

All GSD Members will receive a [10% DISCOUNT at the Patriot Store](#) - good on all items without restriction. (does not include tax or shipping fees) and a FREE subscription to the **Gold Star Journal** - Coming Fall 2011

Yearly Membership \$25.00 - Gold Star Dads membership is for a period of 1 year with a \$25 yearly renewal. membership includes;

- GSD Membership Card
- GSD Members 1 1/2" jacket lapel pin -
- GSD Members 3/4" shirt collar pin -
- GSD Decal for Vehicle

Gold Lifetime Membership \$125.00 - Gold lifetime membership has no renewal fees and includes;

- GSD Membership Card
- GSD Lifetime Members 1 1/2" jacket lapel pin
- GSD Members 3/4" shirt collar pin
- GSD Decal for Vehicle
- GSD Challenge Coin

Platinum Lifetime Membership \$250.00 - Platinum lifetime membership has no renewal fees and includes;

- All of the Lifetime Membership benefits plus
- FREE American Hero Tribute Plaque
- FREE GSD Tribute Hat

American Patriot \$35.00 - The American Patriot is a lifetime associates membership. Patriots built America and are still the backbone of this great country. Like the original patriots, these men & women will stand tall beside the Gold Stars and our Military, We are proud to welcome them. American Patriot Membership has no renewal fees and includes;

- GSD American Patriot 1 1/2" jacket lapel pin
- GSD Challenge Coin



CHRISTMAS GRIEF AND THE HOLIDAYS FROM A SURVIVOR

Thanksgiving and Christmas Grief

The first Thanksgiving and Christmas after John died, I chose avoidance as my main strategy for coping with grief and the Holidays. For Thanksgiving, a friend and I flew back to Thailand. My husband and I had been living and working in Thailand before his sudden death to a drunk driver in July of that year. I had not had time to pack up the house and say a real farewell to my friends there. I chose that time partly because of my school schedule, but mostly because I wasn't ready to deal with family events. For Christmas, I went to visit my brother and other family members in Alberta, Canada, where I grew up. Again, because this was not a regular Christmas tradition for me, it felt safer—I wouldn't have to come face to face with the fact that my husband was missing from his and my other family gatherings.

The difficulty of grief and the Holidays is the absence—the absence of a beloved family member leaves a gaping hole in all the festivities. So as I think back over the past few years, here are some suggestions to help deal with Christmas grief.

- **know your limits**—especially in the first year through the Holidays, be realistic about how you can care for yourself. It is okay to admit that you may not have the emotional capacity to do all you would have done other years. It is okay to do something completely different if it feels right to you.
- **buy yourself a gift from your loved one**—of the Christmas gifts I received, John always bought me the one that was the most meaningful to me. He was someone who cared about quality. If I had been shopping for myself, I might have chosen a lesser quality item. So each year, I think of something I would love to have and John would have loved to buy me. I try to choose for myself what John might have chosen for me. It helps me remember his love.

Buy a gift for your loved one and give it to someone who would like it—read Amy's [Grief and the Holidays](#) interview. In honor of her son, she bought gifts that he would've liked for other children. You could also donate in your loved one's honor: books to a library, building supplies to Habitat for Humanity, playground equipment to your church, whatever feels like it would fit as a gift for your loved one.

Think about how you will deal with your emotions ahead of time—you have no way of knowing all the possible things that can come up during the holidays to trigger sadness, but having a plan for how you will handle those emotional moments will help. Perhaps taking a daily walk and expressing your feelings such as in this [Dealing with Emotions](#) article is what will help you through. Perhaps [journaling](#) through your Christmas grief, is what you need. Maybe it is simply having a friend who will ask you how you are doing and compassionately listen.

Find comfort in happy memories—research tells us that some of the people who are most resilient in moving through grief take time to savor the happy memories they had of their loved one. Remember, a time in a past Holiday season with your loved one when you felt full of joy and love. Spend some quiet moments reliving that time, perhaps review old photographs or journals. Savor the emotions you felt and the gift your loved one was to you.

Take care of yourself physically—although we are used to thinking more about our emotional state of being during grief, remember that the state of our body contributes to the state of our emotions. Too much rich and sweet food, late nights, and an overfull schedule will only deplete you further. Give yourself the gift of rest.

Unfortunately, there is no way to erase the absence of your missing loved one, no easy way to deal with your Christmas grief, however there are ways to honor your loved one and yourself. Although your loved one is not with you this season, look for ways that would uniquely honor the relationship you have had.

SNOWBALL EXPRESS REMINDER!!!

Snowball Express VI will be held in Dallas, TX, 9 December 2011 - 13 December 2011. This year the arrival day will be on Friday and departure the following Tuesday. Registration is now open at www.snowballexpress.org

Snowball Express started in early 2006 with a simple idea: Provide hope and new memories to the children of military fallen heroes who have died while on active duty since 9/11.

America should honor and pay tribute to the children of those military fallen heroes who have died while honorably serving since 9/11. In December of 2006, nearly 900 family members from all across America and the world gathered in Southern California for an unforgettable holiday gathering. Kids and widows discovered they weren't alone. And they found they weren't forgotten.

It was a totally volunteer effort which came together in just a few months to create the largest all-expense-paid gathering for the families of our fallen warriors since 9/11.

In 2007, another unique event was planned for the week after Thanksgiving. This time, over 1,100 children and surviving parents attended as guests of Americans, corporations, and service groups who donated their time, money and resources to create another healing event. Nearly 400 family members attended Snowball Express for the first time.

In 2008 a total of 1437 attendees came to the third annual event with over 900 children attending, many for the first time. Children who had attended previous events rekindled friendships with children met at previous years and new children attending for the first time were mentored by those who had been before. Emotional healing was occurring on many different levels.

American Airlines, Oakley, BP America, Quicksilver, Panda Express, Taco Bell, Hilton Anaheim, Anaheim Marriott, Sheraton Anaheim, Sheraton Park, Southwest Airlines, AirTran Airways, JetBlue Airways, Disneyland and countless other partners and sponsors, combined with thousands of volunteers in Southern California and all across America, contributed and volunteered because it was the right thing to do. Nationally recognized organizations like Ladies Auxiliary VFW, Rotary Clubs, Vietnam Veterans of America, American Legion, Patriot Guard Riders and others stepped forward to donate their resources and gifts. Other local service clubs, churches and schools also donated resources to help the cause.

American Airlines stepped up to again to be the "Official Airline of Snowball Express", with six aircraft donated for charter purposes. All pilots and flight attendants donated their time to spend the weekend with the families. American Airline employees spent thousands of man hours donating their time to make these 5 days and these charters something for these children to always remember. Other companies from all across America are also helping to show these children and our fallen heroes' surviving spouses that they're not forgotten and that America cares.

In 2009, 1500 attendees came to Dallas, Texas for Snowball Express IV. The event was held in Dallas for the first time and once again American Airlines stepped up to the plate, this time providing eight charter flights for our families.

The families enjoyed a day at Southfork Ranch and an evening at the Mesquite Rodeo, an interactive day at the Dallas Convention Center capped off by a concert by Jeff Senour and the CTS Band. The final day was spent at the new Cowboy's Stadium in Arlington, Texas featuring a concert by Gary Sinese and his Lt. Dan Band.



COMING SOON...

We are proud to announce the upcoming Prescott, Arizona Support Group that we will be kicking off January 2012. We will be hosting Support Groups both during the day and in the evening at least once every quarter. The dates and time are to be determined, but we will be utilizing Yavapai College and the Prescott Vet Center as our facility locations. The Prescott Vet Center will have a counselor available following the Support Group for those wanting bereavement counseling. Please spread the word to those in that area. This is not limited to Prescott and Prescott Valley Survivors, but open to all that are interested in attending. We welcome those wanting to join us!

UPCOMING PHOENIX VALLEY SUPPORT GROUPS

West Valley Support Group:

- 10 November 2011 at 6pm
- 08 December 2011 at 6pm
- 12 January 2012 at 6pm
- 09 February 2012 at 6pm

East Valley Support Group:

- 17 November 2011
- 15 December 2011
- 19 January 2012
- 23 February 2012

BOARD OF MEMORIES

Thanks to the suggestion on one of our Survivors, we have created a "Board of Memories". Every Survivor is encouraged to bring in a picture, no larger than a 5x7, of their loved one. The board will be taken to both the East and West Valley Support Groups for Survivors to share with each other, and to laugh and remember the memories of those Fallen. If there are any other suggestions or ways in which you want to share your loved one, please let us know.

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTER

Available to ALL service members, veterans, and family members, the Arizona Coalition has a website to help those job seekers, which is www.ArizonaCoalition.org/employment. Located on 1335 N. 52nd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85008 is an employment center to help those who are unemployed or seeking more employment opportunities. Resources include, resume building, personalized job portal, information on potential job opportunities, and much more. For more information, please visit the above website or by phone at (602) 267-2534.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Email: kevin.k.herzinger@us.army.mil

Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator, Contractor Army Survivor Outreach (SOS) Program
5636 East McDowell Road, Bldg M5710 Attn: SOS Phoenix, Arizona 85008-3495

RESOURCES

Education Websites

Army Family Programs
www.arfp.org

Beaumont Foundation of America
www.bmtfoundation.com

Camp Solari
www.solarihospice.com/go2/solari-kids-camp.cfm

Child Grief Education Association
www.childgrief.org/

Children of Fallen Heroes
www.cfsrf.org

Children of Fallen Patriots Foundation
www.fallenpatriots.org

Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund
www.cfsrf.org

Fisher House Foundation
www.fisherhouse.org

Folds of Honor Foundation
www.foldsofhonor.org

Scholarships

Spouse/Caregiver Spring 2012 Scholarship
<http://www.hopeforthewarriors.org/scholareligh.html>

FRY Scholarship
http://www.gibill.va.gov/documents/factsheets/fry_scholarship.pdf

Pat Tillman Scholarship
http://www.gibill.va.gov/resources/education_resources/Tillman_Scholarship.html

<http://www.foldsofhonor.org/scholarships>

<http://militaryscholar.org/index.html>

TRICARE

General number: 1-888-363-5433

North region: 1-877-874-2273

West region: 1-888-874-9378

South region: 1-800-444-5445

<http://www.tricare.mil>

Additional Resources

Military OneSource
<http://www.militaryonesource.com>

Army Survivor Benefits

1-800-626-3317

<http://www.armycasualty.army.mil>

Navy Survivor Benefits

1-800-368-3202

<http://www.npc.navy.mil/CommandSupport/>

Marine Corps Survivor Benefits

1-800-847-1597

<http://www.manpower.usmc.mil>

Air Force Survivor Benefits

1-800-433-0048

<http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil>

Coast Guard Survivor Benefits

<http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/ras/sbp.asp>

Please visit us on our website: <http://www.azguard.gov/families/SOS.htm>